

# The Czar's Spy

The Mystery of a Silent Love

By Chevalier WILLIAM LE QUEUX Author of "The Closed Book," etc.

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## SYNOPSIS.

The yacht *Lola* narrowly escapes wreck in Leghorn harbor. Gordon Gregg, lieutenant for the British consul, is called upon by Hornby, the *Lola's* owner, and dines aboard with him and his friend, Hydon Chatter. Aboard the yacht he accidentally sees a room full of arms and ammunition and a torn photograph of a young girl. That night the consul's safe is robbed and the *Lola* puts suddenly to sea. The police find that Hornby is a fraud and the *Lola's* name a false one. Gregg visits Capt. Jack Durnford of the marines aboard his vessel, and is surprised to learn that Durnford knows, but will not reveal, the mystery of the *Lola*. "It concerns a woman."

## CHAPTER III—Continued.

He thanked me profusely when I consented to go with him. "Ah, signor padrone!" he said gratefully, "she will be so delighted. It is so very good of you."

We hailed a hansom and drove across Westminster bridge to the address he gave—a gloomy back street off the York road, one of those narrow, grimy thoroughfares into which the sun never shines.

A low-looking, evil-faced fellow opened the door to us and growled acquaintance with Olinto, who, striking a match, ascended the worn, carpetless stairs before me, apologizing for passing before me, and saying in Italian: "We live at the top, signore, because it is cheaper and the air is better."

"Quite right," I said. "Quite right. Go on." And I thought I heard my cab driving away.

It was a gloomy, forbidding, unlighted place into which I would certainly have hesitated to enter had not my companion been my trusted servant, but contrary to my expectations, the sitting-room we entered on the top floor was quite comfortably furnished, clean and respectable, even though traces of poverty were apparent. A cheap lamp was burning upon the table, but the apartment was unoccupied.

Olinto, in surprise, passed into the adjoining room, returning a moment later, exclaiming: "Armida must have gone out to get something. Or perhaps she is with the people, a compositor and his wife, who live on the floor below. They are very good to her. I'll go and find her. Accommodate yourself with a chair, signore." And he drew the best chair forward for me, and dusted it with his handkerchief. I allowed him to go and fetch her, rather surprised that she should be well enough to get about after all he had told me concerning her illness. Yet consumption does not keep people in bed until its final stages.

Olinto returned in a few moments, saying that his wife had evidently gone to do some shopping in the Lower-March.

"I hope you are not pressed for time, signore?" he said apologetically. "But, of course, the poor girl does not know the surprise awaiting her. She will surely not be long."

"Then I'll wait," I said, and flung myself back into the chair he had brought forward for me.

"I have nothing to offer you, signor padrone," he said, with a laugh. "I did not expect a visitor, you know."

"No, no, Olinto, I've only just had dinner. But tell me how you have fared since you left me."

"Ah!" he laughed bitterly. "I had many ups and downs before I found myself here in London. The sea did not suit me—neither did the work. I managed to work my way from Genoa to London. My first place was scullion in a restaurant in Tottenham Court road. Afterwards I went to the Milano, and I hope to get into one of the big hotels very soon—or perhaps the grill-room at the Carlton."

"I'll see what I can do for you," I said. "I know several hotel managers who might have a vacancy."

"Ah, signore!" he cried, filled with gratification. "If you would! A word from you would secure me a good position. I can work, that you know—and I do work. I will work—for her sake."

"Yes," he said in a hoarse voice, his manner suddenly changing. "You have tonight shown me, signore, that you are my friend, and I will, in return, show you that I am yours." And suddenly grasping both my hands, he pulled me from the chair in which I was sitting, at the same time asking in a low intense whisper: "Do you always carry a revolver here in England, as you do in Italy?"

"Yes," I answered in surprise at his action and his question. "Why?"

"Because there is danger here," he answered in the same low earnest tone. "Get your weapon ready. You may want it."

"I don't understand," I said, feeling my hand clutch in my back pocket to make sure it was there.

"Forget what I have said—all—that I have told you tonight, sir," he said. "I have not explained the whole truth. You are in peril—in deadly peril!"

"How?" I exclaimed breathlessly, surprised at his extraordinary change of manner and his evident apprehension lest something should befall me.

"Wait, and you shall see," he whispered. "But first tell me, signore, that you will forgive me for the part I have played in this dastardly affair. I, like yourself, fell innocently into the hands of your enemies."

"My enemies! Who are they?"

"They are unknown, and for the present must remain so. But if you doubt your peril, watch—" and taking the rusty fire-tongs from the grate he carefully placed them on end in front of the deep old armchair in which I had sat, and then allowed them to fall against the edge of the seat, springing quickly back as he did so.

In an instant a bright blue flash shot through the place, and the irons fell aside, fused and twisted out of all recognition.

I stood aghast, utterly unable for the moment to sufficiently realize how narrowly I had escaped death.

"Look! See here, behind!" cried the Italian, directing my attention to the back legs of the chair, where, on bending with the lamp, I saw, to my surprise, that two wires were connected, and ran along the floor and out of the window, while concealed beneath the ragged carpet, in front of the chair, was a thin plate of steel, whereon my feet had rested.

Those who had so ingeniously enticed me to that gloomy house of death had connected up the overhead electric light main with that innocent looking chair, and from some unseen point had been able to switch on a current of sufficient voltage to kill fifty men.

I stood stock-still, not daring to move lest I might come into contact with some hidden wire, the slightest touch of which must bring instant death upon me.

"Your enemies prepared this terrible trap for you," declared the man who was once my trusted servant. "When I entered into the affair I was not aware that it was to be fatal. They gave me no inkling of their dastardly intention. But there is no time to admit of explanations now, signore," he added breathlessly, in a low desperate voice. "Say that you will not prejudice me," he pleaded earnestly.

"I will not prejudice you until I've heard your explanation," I said. "I certainly owe my life to you tonight."

"Then quick! Fly from this house this instant. If you are stopped, then use your revolver. Don't hesitate. In a moment they will be here upon you."

"But who are they, Olinto? You must tell me," I cried in desperation. "Diot! Go! Go!" he cried, pushing me violently towards the door. "Fly, or we shall both die—both of us! Run downstairs. I must make feint of dashing after you."

I turned, and seeing his desperate eagerness, precipitately fled, while he ran down behind me, uttering fierce imprecations in Italian, as though I had escaped him.

A man in the narrow dark passage attempted to trip me up as I ran, but I fired point blank at him, and gaining the door unlocked it, and an instant later found myself out in the street.

It was the narrowest escape from death that I had ever had in all my life—surely the strangest and most remarkable adventure. What, I wondered, did it mean?

Next morning I searched up and down Oxford street for the Restaurant Milano, but could not find it. I asked shopkeepers, postmen and policemen; I examined the London directory at the bar of the Oxford Music hall, and made every inquiry possible. But all was to no purpose. No one knew of such a place. There were restaurants in plenty in Oxford street, from the Frascati down to the humble coffee-shop, but nobody had ever heard of the "Milano."

I drove over to Lambeth and wandered through the maze of mean streets off the York road, yet for the life of me I could not decide into which house I had been taken. There were a dozen which seemed to me that they might be the identical house from which I had so narrowly escaped with my life.

Gradually it became impressed upon me that my ex-servant had somehow gained knowledge that I was in London, that he had watched my exit from the club, and that all his pitiful story regarding Armida was false. He was the envoy of my unknown enemies, who had so ingeniously and so relentlessly plotted my destruction. My unknown enemies had secured the services of Olinto in their dastardly plot to kill me. With what motive?

That day I did my business in the city with a distrust of everyone, not knowing whether I was not followed or whether those who sought my life were not plotting some other equally ingenious move whereby I might go innocently to my death. I endeavored to discover Olinto by every possible means during those stifling days that followed. The heat of London was, to me, more oppressive than the fiery sunshine of the old-world Tuscany, and everyone who could be out of town had left for the country or the sea.

Defeated in every inquiry, and my business at last concluded in London, I went up to Dumfries on a duty which I paid annually to my uncle, Sir George Little. Each time I returned from abroad I was always a welcome guest at Greenlaw, and this occasion proved no exception, for the country houses of Dumfries are always gay in August in prospect of the shooting.

"Some new people have taken Ranloch castle. Rather nice they seem," remarked my aunt as we were sitting together at luncheon the day after my arrival. "Their name is Leithcourt, and they've asked me to drive you over there to tennis this afternoon."

"I'm not much of a player, you know, aunt. In Italy we don't believe in athletics. But if it's out of politeness, of course, I'll go."

"Very well," she said. "Then I'll order the victoria for three."

"There are several nice girls there, Gordon," remarked my uncle mischievously. "You have a good time, so don't think you are going to be bored."

"No fear of that," was my answer. And at three o'clock Sir George, his wife, and myself set out for that fine old historic castle that stands high on the Bognie. When we drove into the grounds we found a gay party in summer toilettes assembled on the ancient bowling green, now transformed into a modern tennis lawn.

Mrs. Leithcourt and her husband, a tall, thin, gray-headed man, both came forward to greet us. They were a merry crowd. The Leithcourts were entertaining a large house party, and their hospitality was on a scale quite in keeping with the fine old place they rented.

Tea was served on the lawn by the footmen, and, tired of the game, I found myself with Muriel Leithcourt, a bright, dark-eyed girl with tightly-bound hair, and wearing a cotton blouse and flannel tennis skirt.

"I know Italy slightly," she said. "I was in Florence and Naples with mother last season."

And then we began to discuss pictures and sculptures and the sights of Italy generally. I discerned from her remarks that she had traveled widely; indeed, she told me that both her father and mother were never happier



In an Instant a Bright Blue Flash Shot Through the Place.

than when moving from place to place in search of variety and distraction. We had entered the huge paneled hall of the castle, and had passed up the quaint old stone staircase to the long banquetting hall with its paneled oak ceiling. It was pleasant lounging there in the cool old room after the hot sunshine outside, and as I gazed around the place I noted how much more luxurious and tasteful it now was to what it had been in the days when I had visited its owner several years before.

"We are awfully glad to be up here," my pretty companion was saying. "We had such a busy season in London." And then she went on to describe the court ball, and two or three of the most notable functions about which I had read in my English paper beside the Mediterranean.

She attracted me on account of her bright vivacity, quick wit and keen sense of humor, her gossip interested me, and as the golden sunset flooded the handsome old room I sat listening to her, inwardly admiring her innate grace and handsome countenance.

I had no idea who or what her father was—whether a wealthy manufacturer, like so many who take expensive shoots and give big entertainments in order to edge their way into society by its back door, or whether he was a gentleman of means and of good family. I rather guessed the latter, from his gentlemanly bearing and polished manner. His appearance, tall and erect, was that of a retired officer, and his clean-cut face was one of marked distinction.

I was telling my pretty companion something of my own life, how, because I loved Italy so well, I lived in Tuscany in preference to living in England, and how each year I came home for a month or two to visit my relations and to keep in touch with things.

Suddenly she said: "I was once in Leghorn for a few hours. We were yachting in the Mediterranean. I love

the sea—and yachting is such awfully good fun. If you only got decent weather."

The mention of yachting brought back to my mind the visit of the *Lola* and its mysterious sequel.

"Your father has a yacht, then?" I remarked, with as little concern as I could.

"Yes. The *Iris*. My uncle is cruising on her up the Norwegian fjords. For us it is a change to be here, because we are so often afloat."

"So you must have made many long voyages, and seen many odd corners of the world, Miss Leithcourt?" I remarked, my interest in her increasing, for she seemed so extremely intelligent and well informed.

"Oh, yes. We've been to Mexico, and to Panama, besides Morocco, Egypt and the west coast of Africa."

"And you've actually landed at Leghorn!" I remarked.

"Yes, but we didn't stay there more than an hour—to send a telegram, I think it was. Father said there was nothing to see there. He and I went ashore, and I must say I was rather disappointed."

"You are quite right. The town itself is ugly and uninteresting. But the outskirts—San Jacopo, Ardenza and Antignano are all delightful. It was unfortunate that you did not see them. Was it long ago when you put in there?"

"Not very long. I really don't recollect the exact date," was her reply. "We were on our way home from Alexandria."

"Have you ever, in any of the ports you've been, seen a yacht called the *Lola*?" I asked eagerly, for it occurred to me that perhaps she might be able to give me information.

"The *Lola*!" she gasped, and instantly her face changed. A flush overspread her cheeks, succeeded next moment by a deathlike pallor. "The *Lola*!" she repeated in a strange, hoarse voice, at the same time endeavoring strenuously not to exhibit any apprehension. "No. I have never heard of any such vessel. Is she a steam yacht? Who's her owner?"

I regarded her in amazement and suspicion, for I saw that mention of the name had aroused within her some serious misgiving. That look in her dark eyes as they fixed themselves upon me was one of distinct and unspeakable terror.

What could she possibly know concerning the mysterious craft?

"I don't know the owner's name," I said, still affecting not to have noticed her alarm and apprehension. "The vessel ran aground at the Meloria, a dangerous shoal outside Leghorn, and through the stupidity of her captain was very nearly lost."

"Yes?" she gasped, in a half-whisper, bending to me eagerly, unable to sufficiently conceal the terrible anxiety consuming her. "And you—did you go aboard her?"

"Yes," was the only word I uttered.

A silence fell between us, and as my eyes fixed themselves upon her, I saw that from her handsome mobile countenance all the light and life had suddenly gone out, and I knew that she was in secret possession of the key to that remarkable enigma that so puzzled me.

Of a sudden the door opened, and a voice cried gayly:

"Why, I've been looking everywhere for you, Muriel. Why are you hidden here? Aren't you coming?"

We both turned, and as she did so a low cry of blank dismay involuntarily escaped her.

Next instant I sprang to my feet. The reason of her cry was apparent, for there, in the full light of the golden sunset streaming through the long open windows, stood a broad-shouldered, fair-haired man in tennis flannels and a Panama hat—the fugitive I knew as Philip Hornby!

I faced him, speechless.

## CHAPTER IV.

### In Which the Mystery Increases.

Neither of us spoke. Hornby started quickly as soon as his eyes fell upon me, and his face became blanched to the lips, while Muriel Leithcourt, quick to notice the sudden change in him, rose and introduced us in as calm a voice as she could command.

"I don't think you are acquainted," she said to me with a smile. "This is Mr. Martin Woodroffe—Mr. Gordon Gregg."

We bowed, exchanging greetings as strangers, while, carefully watching, I saw how greatly the minds of both were relieved. They shot meaning glances at each other, and then, as he chatted with the daughter of the house, he cast a quick, covert glance at me, and then darted a meaning look at her—a look of renewed confidence, as though he felt that he had successfully averted any suspicious I might have held.

We talked of the prospects of the grouse and the salmon, and from his remarks he seemed to be as keen at sport as he had once made out himself to be at yachting. While I was carefully watching the rapid working of his mind, Leithcourt himself entered and joined us.

Host and guest were evidently on the most intimate terms. Leithcourt addressed him as "Martin," and while they were talking Muriel suggested that we should stroll down to the tennis courts again, an invitation which, much as I regretted leaving the two men, I was bound to accept. Among the party strolling and lounging there prior to departure were quite a number of people I knew, people who had shooting boxes in the vicinity and were my uncle's friends. In Scotland there is always a hearty hospitality among the sporting folk, and the laws

of caste are far less rigorous than they are in England.

I was standing chatting with two ladies who were about to take leave of their hostess, when Leithcourt returned, but alone. Hornby had not accompanied him. Was it because he feared to again meet me?

In order to ascertain something regarding the man who had so mysteriously fled from Leghorn, I managed by the exercise of a little diplomacy to sit on the lawn with a young married



I Regarded Her in Astonishment and Suspicion.

woman named Tennant, wife of a cavalry captain, who was one of the house party. After a little time I succeeded in turning the conversation to her fellow guests, and more particularly to the man I knew as Hornby.

"Oh! Mr. Woodroffe is most amusing," declared the bright little woman. "He's always playing some practical joke or other. After dinner he is usually the life and soul of our party."

"Yes," I said, "I like what little I have seen of him. He's a very good fellow, I should say. I've heard that he's engaged to Muriel," I hazarded. "Is that true?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## TO IMPROVE THE SUITCASE

Addition of Pockets Will Greatly Increase the Capacity of the Receptacle.

The suitcase can be greatly improved, so far as convenience is concerned, by the addition of pockets. These pockets may be made with or without flaps. If the flaps have snaps upon them the contents will not come out easily when the suitcase is tossed about.

This lining is best made of denim or linen, and can be made detachable, so that it may occasionally go to the laundry. Narrower strips of linen are placed upon that covering the bottom, the inside of the lid and about the sides of the lining, making a double lining, into which rows of machine stitching are placed, joining the two layers of lining together, to form as many pockets as you desire. Three pockets or more can be very well accommodated in the lid, an equal number can be accommodated in the bottom, and several smaller pockets about the sides for jewelry, powder, etc. In this way everything can easily be kept in its place. The larger articles, of course, such as frocks, blouses, skirts, etc., are packed in the remaining open space of the suitcase. If you wish to make an elaborate lining, it can be made of heavy satin.

## Boer "Seer" Began Revolt.

The British official report on the South African rebellion is now issued. It traced the trouble back to one Van Rensburg, a notorious "seer," who announced that he saw a vision of seven bulls fighting, and a gray bull victorious. The gray bull Van Rensburg recognized at once as Germany.

Van Rensburg is a farmer, who gained a reputation as a prophet in the last war. He made his luckiest hit by prophesying that General Delarey would defeat Lord Methuen, and as the prophecy "came off," he has ever since been regarded as a man with miraculous powers. His adhesion to the revolt of Kemp and Beyers had a great influence over the more ignorant Boers.

## Origin of Veronica.

One of the most interesting of twisted names is the girl's name, Veronica, which, by the way, is not so common as its beauty entitles it to be. You probably know the legend of how St. Veronica wiped the brow of Christ on his way to Calvary, and how on the handkerchief a miraculous print of the Saviour's face remained. This was the "verum ikon" (the true image) celebrated in Christian legend, and the name Veronica bestowed upon the saint was simply an anagram of those two words.

## Encouraging Character.

One thing is indisputable: the chronic mood of looking longingly at what we have not, or thankfully at what we have, realizes two very different types of character. And we certainly can encourage the one or the other.—Lucy C. Smith.

# INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

## LESSON FOR JUNE 6

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID.

LESSON TEXT—II Samuel 11:2-12:7a. GOLDEN TEXT—Create in me a clean heart O God.—Psalm 51:10.

This is a lesson that demands great care in its presentation and treatment, which will differ widely according to age. For the younger the briefest sort of statement that David fell in love with Uriah's wife and to obtain her had her husband killed will be sufficient. With such, throw the emphasis upon the danger of harboring evil thoughts and the need of heart purity (see Golden Text).

With adults, however, some time may be devoted to the social evil which is such a menace to every nation, care being taken lest the discussion become morbid, or that we neglect to emphasize the fact that the cure is not in regulation or reformation but in the regeneration of the human heart.

I. David's Many Good Deeds, II Samuel, 7 and 9. As a background for his most repulsive sin David had a long list of excellent deeds. His desire for a better abiding place for the ark was not according to God's will for two reasons: first, that an ornate house might easily corrupt, through idolatry, the spirituality of the Hebrew religion; second, David was a man of war and therefore not qualified for temple building. Though denied, David did not despair, but at once provided that his successor carry out his desire.

II. David's One Great Sin, II Samuel, 11:6. David's victories over his enemies are dismissed in a few verses, yet his sin is set forth in detail—another evidence of the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. David had followed the example of neighboring kings and taken to himself many wives, evidently regarding his fancy as supreme and himself as above the law. David was "off guard" in the matter of temptation, a dangerous position for all, both soldier and civilian. David had too long and too great a period of success and prosperity after his long period of privation, and this led to carelessness and pride. David was "off duty." Indulging in ease while Joab did his fighting. As a result he became an adulterer and a murderer, and the record in no way seeks to palliate his guilt. From all this the record brings to us many important lessons. Outwardly prosperous and his army successful, David must have felt in his heart the spiritual blight in the words, "but the thing was evil in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 27 R. V.); no psalm writing then.

III. Nathan's Parable, II Samuel, 12:1-7. It is an evidence of God's grace that he sent his servant to rebuke and restore this "man after his own heart." Such is his mercy, for he does not will that any should perish but that all might come to the knowledge of forgiveness (Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 23:37). No parable ever had its desired effect more quickly than this one. It brought conviction and repentance (v. 13) and led to the writing of the fifty-first psalm. It was a delicate task set before Nathan thus to rebuke the king, yet it reveals the essential nobleness of David in that he did not become angry. Nathan's task and his wisdom are revealed in his approach and in the way he led David to condemn, unwittingly, his own course of action. This was better than to begin by upbraiding and denunciation. Verse two suggests, inferentially, God's great goodness to David, which made the offense one of gross ingratitude.

IV. Thou Art the Man!—v. 7a. Thus far the story is one all too common, then and now, of the strong crushing the weak and glorying in their selfishness. What follows is the evidence of God's response to man's repentance, the parallel to which has nowhere else been found in the ancient world. The glory of it is that David heard and heeded God's messenger. The whole sordid story with its resultant action on David's part brings us many priceless lessons. (1) That man who had lived a life of faith and communion fell most miserably when he neglected his duty and took his eyes off God. There is a grave danger ahead of the man who begins to trifle with sin (I Cor. 10:12). (2) Though a man fall (the godly man) yet he is not utterly cast down. There is pardon for the vilest sinner and the most abject backslider. David's murderous hands and sin-stained soul found pardon (Ps. 32 and 51). (3) A man's sins, though he may find pardon, will cloud all of his future.

David felt it in his own life and family; both daughter and sons felt its blight (see chapter 13), and it brought forth David's immortal lament over Absalom. David's trusted friend joined the son's rebellion and caused David great sorrow (see 11:3; 23:34; 15:21 and Ps. 55:12-14). A human book would cover up, omit or seek to palliate such an act by one of the great of the earth (cf. the story of Napoleon and Josephine), yet the Bible tells all the facts to serve as a warning and to reveal God's matchless grace and mercy.

A farmer's idea of entertainment is to watch a town man milk a cow.

Wash day is smile day if you use Red Cross Ball Blue, American made, therefore the best made. Adv.

## The Real Thing.

Tiny Toddlers—What is a heroine, maw? Maw—A heroine, my dear, is any woman that is married.

YOUR OWN DRUGGIST WILL TELL YOU Try Murine Eye Remedy for Red, Weak, Watery Eyes and Granulated Eyelids. No Stinging—Just Eye Comfort. Write for Book of the Eye by mail Free. Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago.

## Differentiation.

Small Boy—You have to be both, don't you, Miss Oldgirl? Ancient Family Friend—What are you talking about, Willie? Both what?

Small Boy—Why, ma says you're no chicken and pa says you're an old hen.

ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE for the TROOPS Over 100,000 packages of Allen's Foot-Ease, the antiseptic powder to shake into your shoes, are being used by the German and Allied troops at the front because it relieves the feet, gives instant relief to corns and bunions, hot, swollen, aching, tender feet, and makes walking easy. Sold everywhere, etc. Try IT TODAY. Don't accept any substitute. Adv.

## A Regular Excuse.

"Does your husband carry much life insurance?"

"I don't know the exact amount, but it's just enough so that whenever I want a new gown or hat he always manages to have a premium to meet." —Detroit Free Press.

## DON'T MIND PIMPLES

Cuticura Soap and Ointment Will Banish Them. Trial Free.

These fragrant supercreamy emollients do so much to cleanse, purify and beautify the skin, scalp, hair and hands that you cannot afford to be without them. Besides they meet every want in toilet preparations and are most economical. Sample each free by mail with Book. Address postcard, Cuticura, Dept. XY, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

## Cultivating Reasons.

"That man certainly does cultivate country acquaintances." "He has good reasons. He sells plows."

## Everybody Satisfied.

"I see where another baseball player has been fined for having a row with an umpire."

"Do you sympathize with him?" "Not at all. My observation is that the average player who is fined for assaulting an umpire feels that he got his money's worth."

## Boston's Advantage.

Mrs. Gotham—But four streets in Boston are so crooked.

Mrs. Hubb—And yours in New York are so straight.

"But aren't straight streets an advantage?" "Why, no. Now in Boston one can walk and walk and get some place, but in New York you can walk and walk and get nowhere."